



## Treball de fi de màster

Títol: Photography as a pedagogic tool to stimulate social cohesion and cooperative work inside the vocational training classroom

Cognoms: Villaplana i Casaponsa

Nom: Anna

Titulació: Màster en Formació del Professorat d'Educació Secundària Obligatòria i Batxillerat, Formació Professional i Ensenyament d'Idiomes

Especialitat: Formació Professional

Director/a: Eva Gallardo

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## 1. Introduction

There is in Spain a severe problem of early school leaving (ESL). The country holds one of the highest rates in Europe: 19%, in 2016, in front of 10,7% of the EU28 total average. The European target is to achieve a benchmark of 10% in 2020, although for Spain, still falling apart, has been adjusted to a more realistic 15%. (European Commission, 2018). But this is nothing. If we keep digging into the data, a rather sad scenario draws to our eyes: youth with foreign nationality doubles the ESL rate compared to the ones with Spanish citizenship: it reaches 41.6% and raises a red flag over inclusiveness policies and the efforts done by the state to achieve a better societal cohesion (Sancha, 2016).

It is known that the education level of a person affects his chance to be employed and his salary level. So, things can get even uglier: in 2015, people with tertiary education earned 81% more than those who have completed lower secondary education or less (Sancha, 2016). A mirror of the vulnerability of low qualified people, not only in front of unemployment but with exaggeratedly lower salaries. This is the portrait of a society that seems not to move in the right direction. Not, at least, to the one we would love.

An efficient solution is required. But, for a solution to be found, the cause must be identified. And we wonder, which is the reason behind such a desolate landscape? An eloquent voice is unequivocal: prevention policies of ESL by young students should be a strategic goal (Salvà-Mut, 2017).

This study introduces photography as an active learning tool to improve social skills of the students. Despite the many practical cases in the scientific literature of all other educational levels (Johnson et al., 2014; Meehlhause, 2016; Taylor, 2012), there is a lack of documented experiences of blending photographic practices and Vocational and educational training (VET). With this backdrop, the overall aim of this work seeks to examine the potential of using photography as a pedagogic learning tool in a VET classroom, to strengthen the collaboration between the students and to build up the sense of community. Moreover, it displays the design of a workshop in which photography is used for the above-related goals. The structure of the study leans on two research questions: a) what are the previous experiences in the use of photography as a pedagogic learning tool in education, and mainly in the VET context? And b) what are the features and the activities for a photography workshop for VET students to help them to foster social cohesion in the classroom.

The study starts by drawing the quota lines of the problem, within the VET Spanish system boundaries. After it, a literature review unfolds the central axes in which this first approach to the topic lays: the conjunction of the personal photography and the social media in the crossing point where connectivism and an upgrowing need for digital, informational and visual literacies meet. After this, a design proposal for a workshop drives the reader through the self and group-portraits as means to teach the principals of the visual literacy. The work finished with a succinct conclusion suggesting the need for this research to be continued.

## 2. The problem

### 2.1. Problem identification: background

Spain shows one of the highest rate ESL in Europe, flagged on all education levels. Data talks by itself. Among population aged 25- 64 years (2015); 42.6% holds low level of education [1], 22.4% medium [2] and 35.1% high [3]. European Union (EU28) numbers for the same data are 23.5%, 46.5% and 30.1% respectively. Comparison between young population group, aged 20-24 years (2014), becomes even more eloquent: only 65,8% in Spain, versus 82,2% in EU28, holds medium or high education (Itinerarios de éxito y abandono en la formación profesional, 2018).

If we take a look in the VET, according to the most recent data on educational outcomes in intermediate professional training (FPGM), only 50.5% of students who started a FPGM and 73.61% of those who passed to the second course, graduate (Cedefop ReferNet Spain, 2015). This evidences points a critical situation stressed by special relevance given to VET below described.

#### *Special relevance given to the VET*

Cedefop's skills forecast for the Spanish labour market points out to an increasing demand (higher than the EU average) for intermediate and higher level qualifications and a diminishing demand on low level qualifications (Sancha, 2016). In this context, the percentage of VET in the increase of the population with secondary level studies acquires stronger relevance, as well as the decrease of ESL. On the contrary, CEDEFOP and OECD have recently reported between 33.5 and 35% of students enrolled in vocational training on the total number of students in upper secondary education (Cedefop ReferNet Spain, 2015, OECD, 2017), compared to 48.5% of the European Union (EU - 26) (Cedefop ReferNet Spain, 2015). To this it must be added that, according to the most recent data on educational outcomes in intermediate professional training (FPGM), only 50.5% of those who started a FPGM graduate and 73.61% of those who passed to the second course (Itinerarios de éxito y abandono en la formación profesional, 2018).

There is a lack of studies focused in the causes of ESL in VET although reducing the high levels of it is one of the main challenges facing most of European education systems (European Commission 2011; Salva-Mut et al. 2014). There is ample research and scientific literature, but despite this abundance, almost all of it is related to general secondary education leaving. (Comas-Forgas et al., 2017)

Salva-Mut et al. (2017) had pointed some directives for interventions taken out from a case study of another training center with Basic VET Programms (PFI), also located in Barcelona municipality. The qualitative results stressed the focus on the guidance processes among others. Where guidance by tutors is directly related to the disorientation of young people and its need to be addressed.

#### *European and Spanish Policy Goals*

The European Parliament, in 2006, defined the Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning as a measure to promote lifelong learning strategies among Member States. Key competences are described as those competences all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employment, social inclusion and active citizenship. They are composed of '*knowledge, skills and attitudes*' and go beyond the notion of only (academic) 'knowledge' ((European Commission, 2006). These key competences are set up as objectives in the Spanish VET system (regulation 1147/2011 , Art 3c and 3d). (Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal, 2016). Teamwork is a transversal skill embeded throughout the key competences.

<sup>1</sup> Low level of education group: People with a lower degree than upper secondary education. In the Spanish educational system, these are people who have a maximum of the Graduate Certificate in Compulsory Secondary Education (GESO) or equivalent

<sup>2</sup> Includes people with a high school diploma (Intermediate Vocational Training and Bachelor in the Spanish case) or equivalent.

<sup>3</sup> Includes people with higher university and non-university degrees.

In 2018, the European Commission presented a Proposal for a new Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. The important changes occurred in the European societies and economies in the last decade, the deep changes in the labour markets and fast evolution in the ways of teaching and learning thus the digital and technological innovations, caused the need for a revision of the Key Competences stated in 2006. The Recommendation presents not only an updated European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, but also outlines good practices supporting the development of competence-oriented approaches in education and training, including non-formal learning and in a lifelong perspective. (European Commission, 2018)

The results of an online public consultation made on the topic showed a wide support to the competence-oriented education, training and learning in Europe. The majority of the respondents expressed to see a need for minor changes in the Reference Framework, among them: to stress the importance of personal and interpersonal skills, sometimes referred to as 'life', 'socio-emotional', or 'soft' skills, as they help individuals respond to uncertainty and change. Skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, intercultural skills and problem solving are suggested to be strengthened in the Reference Framework (European Commission 2018).

## **2.2. Why photography?**

A new paradigm is required to elucidate and respond to the characteristics, needs, desires, demands, and expectations of today's college student" (Harrington, 1998).

In the past decade, digital cameras and social media have revolutionized our society, and created a "new homogenized culture" that is not shaped or trimmed by political or social borders. The increased popularity of digital pictures has been further accelerated by the integration of cameras into cell phones. The increased ownership and use of digital imaging technologies, especially among teenagers, have a variety of implications that can be successfully exploited in educational-learning meaningful process.

Many positive experiences have been developed using photography as an active learning method. Scientific literature documenting practical cases in primary and secondary educational levels from different perspectives is available, also in university courses. But there is a lack of cases of blending photographic practices and VET, where once more, photography can be examined in real case as an alternative pedagogic tool, inheriting suggestions and conclusions of previous work as raw material for the study of new cases.

### **3. Aim of the study**

The overall aim of this work seeks to examine the potential of using photography as a pedagogic learning tool in a VET classroom, to strengthen the collaboration between the students and to build up the sense of community. Moreover, it will offer the design of a workshop in which photography is used for the above-related goals. Thus, two research questions (RQ) are pursued:

- RQ1. What are the previous experiences in the use of photography as pedagogic learning tool in education, and mainly in the VET context.
- RQ2. What are the features and the activities for a photography workshop for VET student to help them to foster social cohesion in the classroom.

## 4. Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, a literature review focused on the use of photography in education has been conducted. For this, the following steps were taken: a) searching for relevant documents; b) classifying them according to the different topics and creating sorts of categories related to the nature of practices in which photography is used; and c) selecting the documents aligned with the propose of the study.

### 4.1. Searching for relevant documents

We focused on the use of photography in education in order to search for relevant literature for this study. We performed the searches in the EBSCO Academic Search Complete (EBSCO ASC) database. We considered this database because of its nature: an indexing and abstracting service that includes Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus and Web of Science. To ensure the quality of the sources only articles of peer-reviewed journals were selected, while at the same time, to widen the cultural contexts, literature in English and Spanish were consulted. Due to preliminary searches we decided to also include books and chapters in these searches. Three stages of research were taken between April and June of 2018.

To select the terms used for the literature search a threading strategy was followed, starting by the cornerstones of the study: “photography”, “vocational training”, “education”, “pedagogy”, “cohesion” and “community”. Some of the keywords found in the outcomes of the first queries were used in subsequent searches with several formula combinations (see Table 1).

Table 1. Keywords strategy of the queries

Search date	Query formula	Database
2018/04/01	allintitle: photography and vocational or VET allintitle: photography and education allintitle: photography and pedagogy allintitle: photography and learn allintitle: photography and active learn allintitle: photography and cohesion allintitle: photography and teamwork or cooperative allintitle: photography and classroom allintitle: photography and community allintitle: photography and cohesion alltext: education and photovoice alltext: education and participatory photography	Google Scholar
2018/04/14	photography photography vocational photography community photography vocational community photovoice participatory photography photography critical thinking photography literacy visual literacy	ERIC

Table 1. Keywords strategy of the queries (continuation)

Search date	Query formula	Database
2018/06/04	photography and pedagog* education and teaching TI:photogr* and AB:elementary school or elementary education TI:photogr* and AB:primary school or primary education TI:photogr* and AB:secondary school or secondary education or middle school or high school TI:photogr* and AB:vocational education or vocational school or vocational training TI:photogr* and AB:undergraduate TI:photography and AB:visual learning TI:photography and AB:visual pedagogy TI:photogr* and AB:teamwork or collaborati* or cooperati* TI:photogr* and AB:teamwork or collaborati* or cooperati* and educati* or pedagog* TI:photography and AB:community TI:selfie and AB: educati* or pedagog*	EBSCO ASC

#### 4.2. Classifying and selecting the documents

When the stage of the research in the databases finished, all the documents were classified by topics under the following categories: core concepts, theories, case studies, photographic uses and miscellaneous (see Table 2). Finally, the full-text of the relevant articles were analysed. The correspondent outcomes are displayed in the Findings section of this study.

Table 2. Article classification by topics and categories

Category	Topic
Core concepts	Community, Early school leaving, Engagement Social cohesion, ICT, Social Inclusion, Social Media, Team work, Visual literacy, Vocational Training, Vocational habitus
Theories	Connectivism, Arts integration
Photographic uses	Action research, Auto-photography, Participatory photography, Personal photography, Photo elicitation, Photo Novel, Photo Journal, Photovoice, Selfie,
Miscellaneous	Basic competencies, Habitus, Other literacies, Pierre Bourdieu

#### 4.3. Methodology applied on the design of the workshop

The methodology used to design the workshop is a mixture of the following detailed procedures:

- 1) Personal observations accumulated over the years as a professional in applied photography and as a student in the field of design and visual communication; also during the last months as an internship teacher at a VET center.
- 2) Interviews with other teachers, teaching VET and Photography at ESO and pre-university levels; with researchers in the field of social sciences who work with methods related to Action Research.
- 3) Personal reflection following this order: recalling the intuition, critical analysis through sharing with colleagues, bibliographic search to contrast the first conclusions, and as a last step, new thinking to incorporate the utter findings.



## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Literature review

In the underneath sections, we disclose the most relevant findings related to our research questions: RQ1) what are the previous experiences in the use of photography as a pedagogic learning tool in education, and mainly in the VET context? And RQ2) what are the features and the activities for a photography workshop for VET student to help them to foster social cohesion in the classroom.

#### *RQ1. Participatory photography or photo voice focused on inclusiveness*

Several methods involving photography in a process of active collaboration between participants, or active participation by the learners in their learning process have evolved. Participatory photography or 'photo voice' (Wang & Burris, 1994) is one such tool. Participatory photography is a participatory action research method, which involves providing (often marginalized groups of) people with cameras to record their realities and perspectives. The process of taking photographs and subsequent group discussion creates dialogue, exchange of perspectives and knowledge production about personal and community issues and can drive changes through public and/or decision-makers awareness (Hirst, 2015). Such a method can be applied in the field of education. For example, through providing students with point-and-shoot cameras, or allowing them to use their cellphone cameras and explore social-related topics as part of their program syllabus. Via carefully-designed pedagogically-approach, teachers can thus use the photos taken by the students to promote dialogue among them, and provide them with new knowledge and empowering new thinking.

#### *RQ1. Reflexive photography*

Reflexive photography is another example of the use of photography as educational tool to help boost the engagement of the students to learn via self-reflection. Photography as a visual medium for education is believed that it can provides sufficient stimulation to engage learners in knowledge discovery, and development of new skills. As an example, Reflexive photography was applied in an experiment conducted in an Institute in Beja, Portugal, during which a group of students participated in a field cultural experience, involving reflective thought, critical dialogue and action (Amersson & Livingston, 2014). The experiment aimed at examining students' impressions and perceptions about the city. The results of such experiment provided support on the use of photography as a visual educational tool in tourism education and demonstrated documented evidences on the students' cognitive, practical, and learning process via their international cultural experience.

The term Reflexive photography was explained by Harper, 1986, and in the field of education, can be one of the tool to engage the learners in visual education, as also drawings for example, and can be used with the goal to enhance the social involvement of the teacher with his/her students and use that to diffuse new thinking and knowledge to them, sharing views and ideas (Mitchell, 2011).

#### *RQ1. Photo elicitation and auto-photography*

Taylor (2016) published an article on the use of still photography to understand and bring to light adults' teachers believes. Although from the perspective of a photographer practitioner does not raise any novelty, what constitutes its originality is the use on the education. States in exact words the benefits that using photography can deliver. Collecting from other authors findings, he reviews several technics. Especially relevant to us are photo elicitation and auto-photography:

Photo-elicitation is a technique that involves using still photographs to stimulate the interview process (Harper, 1994; Tucker and Dempsey, 1991). This photo-interviewing technique operates with 'the express aim of exploring participants' values, beliefs, attitudes, and meanings and in order to trigger memories, or to explore group dynamics or systems' (Prosser, 1998).

Regarding auto-photography, it is worth mentioning the parallelism it shares with photo voice. As Taylor (2016) follows:

In auto-photography, the participant, rather than the researcher, is given control of the camera and is responsible for taking photographs. This approach 'permits others to view the world from the view of the observed persons' (Ziller, 1990)

#### *RQ2. The role of the vocational habitus*

Van House (2011) in his study about personal photography recalls Pierre Bourdieu's research methods, when he used photography to demonstrate his concept of habitus: "Bourdieu (1996) and Bourdieu and Bourdieu (2004) studied photographic practices among French families to demonstrate his concept of habitus and his methods of connecting lived experience to social regularities. He concluded that decisions about image content, aesthetics, display and exchange reflect and reproduce class. He argued that family photography 'reinforc[es] the integration of the family group by reasserting the sense it has both of itself and its unity'".

Therefore, it seems that it is not a coincidence the role that photography can play in empowering adolescent students, as we, later on, will suggest, through the process of negotiation with its vocational habitus. In 2003, Coley et al. developed this concept, based on Bourdieu's one, "to explain a central aspect of students' experience, as they have to orient to a particular set of dispositions – both idealized and realized... It is argued that learning is a process of becoming. Learning cultures and the vocational cultures in which they are steeped transform those who enter them".

#### *RQ2. On connectivism and visual literacy*

Photography as a tool to try to overcome the limitations of behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism, towards connectivism (Duke, 2013).

Experience has long been considered the best teacher of knowledge. Since we cannot experience everything, other people's experiences, and hence other people, become the surrogate for knowledge. 'I store my knowledge in my friends' is an axiom for collecting knowledge through collecting people (Stephenson, 2004). Unlike constructivism, which states that learners attempt to foster understanding by meaning making tasks, chaos states that the meaning exists – the learner's challenge is to recognize the patterns which appear to be hidden. Meaning-making and forming connections between specialized communities are important activities (Siemens, 2004).

There is a lot of debate around connectivism. There is no consensus on whether it can be considered an epistemological theory. But there is a collective agreement about the fact that it emphasizes a need today accepted by many scholars: the digital and information literacies. And at this junction is where we believe that photography is one of the most underutilized pedagogical tools, especially in the VET, although it is among the ones with the highest potential for the enhancement of visual literacy.

#### *RQ2. Social media, social interaction?*

Some of the benefits of blending Social Media with the formal pedagogies are: receive prompt feedback on content-related questions or performances; use peers as mentors; derive enjoyment from belonging to something larger than themselves; and encounter diverse perspectives (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). In addition to them, since communication is directed with a style and channel very familiar to the students, we expect a more meaningful connection between them, as well as the stimulation of individual voice and sharing, especially those that tend to be more reluctant to raise public opinions. Therefore a significant boosting of social interaction might be reached.

#### *RQ2. Classroom cohesion that mirrors and roots the pathway to the society cohesion*

Lazarides et al. (2016) carried out a study focused on VET students, in Germany. Results show a correlation between relatedness, intrinsic motivation and self-exploration. Relevant for us is the following data: "...student-perceived support for autonomy, competence and relatedness in class was significantly positively related to their intrinsic motivation and self-exploration.

Student-perceived support for competence was significantly positively related to environment exploration. Student-perceived relatedness in class was significantly positively related to their achievement. Intrinsic motivation was significantly positively related to self- and environment exploration and achievement.” In the same article, the authors recall Gottfredson (1996) to conceptualise career exploration as a developmental process in which individuals attempt to place themselves in the social order.

### *RQ2. Personal photography*

It became essential to us, at the last stages of our study, to get back and review Nancy A. Van House article again: Personal photography, digital technologies and the uses of the visual. The author analyses the effects of the transition from film to digital technologies and seeks “...on science and technology studies for help in understanding photography as an on-going practice of assemblage and performance, and the changes in photographic technologies as an opportunity to see technology-in-the-making – the activities by which people are reproducing sociomaterial relations. In this view, photographs have agency as they ‘take the relay’ across space and time” (Van House, 2011). It is precisely from this perspective that we assemble photography in our study with means to design a workshop to foster cooperation among students and the sense of community. This personal photography that turns out to be an object of communication rather than of memory is the one that clicks our puzzle. From this asset, we can envision an activity that initiates bonding between mates and teachers in the classroom.

## **5.2. Designing a workshop proposal**

### **5.2.1. Context of application**

Target: First-course students of the first level of upper secondary vocational training (CFGM), professional family of Graphic arts. This workshop is not tailor-designed for a specific degree of the professional family's catalogue, but more a seminar aimed to fit into any of the degrees, moreover, it could be carried out in any first term of upper secondary VET of the whole range of professional families offered by the center. We based our decision on the assumption that the need for fostering cooperation, to build up the sense of community and to widen the knowledge on the professional family is a common starting point for most of the students who join any of these degrees.

Reminding Salva-Mut et al. (2017) case study, many teachers of the Basic VET Programms (PFI) already pointed the disorientation of young people and its need to be addressed. As final conclusions the authors raise the need to improve the academic-professional orientation processes that take place in the institutes, both before the moments when young people should choose training itineraries such as follow-up to be done during the course after the election.

The proposed seminar is not addressed to PFI but we assets that students of both curricula might share same sort of problematics. Although this assertion cannot be proven, shows not to be misleading in light of the unfolding data below.

Location: Barcelona city, Gràcia district.

Center characteristics<sup>4</sup>: According to Casaponsa (2016), the centre has about 3,300 students enrolled each year, but this number is usually reduced to approximately 3,000 around Christmas. It offers initial, upper-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level VET programms and upper-secondary education. Absenteeism and ESL are very low in the second level of post-secondary VET (CFGS), with approximately a 10%. Slightly higher in upper-secondary education with a 12%, and much higher in the first level of upper-secondary VET (CFGM) with a 20% that in some groups can reach up to 40%.

Generally speaking, in Casaponsa (2016) it was mentioned that socio-economic status of the students is medium-low or low. It is worth mentioning that 25% are applicants for financial grants. Most come from the city of Barcelona, about 40% from the suburbs (25 km radius

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<sup>4</sup> All data provided is real although due to confidentiality requirements all names have been changed.

approx), and a much smaller percentage from populations of other provinces of Catalonia or even other autonomous communities of Spain. Regarding the age, most of the students are above 18, even in the case of CFGM, this is partly because some have repeated academic years, and that many students come from the labor market.

Moreover, the students enrolled CFGM are the ones with the lowest educational, most of them come from the entrance examinations, PFI or Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate (*ESO*) approved but with a note very close to five. It is in this group of students where there are more deficiencies in essential competencies and where more students with learning difficulties are detected; At the same time, it is the group where there are more absenteeism, less motivation for the studies and lack of proper professional guidance.

On the other hand, in relation to the sex of the students, in the Baccalaureate the percentage of each genre is quite the same, but in the formative cycles, both middle and upper grade, the gender predominant in each specialty corresponds to gender stereotypes related to trades. For example, the professional families of administration or health for the girls, or of construction and mechanical civil work or computer science for the boys.

*Emplacement in the curricula:* All VET programs have scheduled one hour per week for tutorial purposes. The workshop will be performed during this hours within the first three months of the course. Classes are between 25-30 people per group.

*Frequency:* One-hour session, once per week.

*Tools:* Photographs will be taken with student's mobile phone. In the classroom, Video projector.

### **5.2.2. Overview**

Personal photography underpins the bases of the workshop. Today, youth extensively performs this practice quotidianly, and more than any other generation did before. Most of them are carrying the cell phone 24/7, and, with it, a camera. Understanding photographic practices and the new functions of photographs is essential to locate them within the teaching and learning activities.

Today, taking photographs is something far from what it was at the beginning of the twenty-century when Kodak spread his Brownies with the promising slogan "You press the button, we do the rest." and made everyone a photographer. It is even far away from the turn over of the new century when internet mobile access and digital cameras were not already spanned as they are now. The upcoming of social software or social media (SM) changed the 'paradigm'. They are the natural environment for the so-called digital native (Prensky, 2009).

Recently published data on Social Media and digital devices use among Catalan youth reveal that 13% of students have a mobile phone before the age of 10; 80%, computer, and 20% are present in social networks between 8 and ten years. 40% of children use applications similar to SM before they turn 12 and 75% do so after that (La Vanguardia, 2018). Online image-sharing facilities are shaping brand-new communicative habits characterized by intensive use of imagery. In this renewed ecosystem, personal photography has moved from being an object of memory to object of communication (Van House, 2011). Therefore, as we have mentioned above, an increasing need for education on information and visual literacies arises. Based on this, the main idea of the seminar is to take a common practice that students use in an intuitive or mimetic way and to translate it into the classroom through several tasks.

The workshop is going to be divided into two parts, based on a 15 weeks schedule: a) Approach and b) Working on a project. Learning tasks will be scheduled on a weekly basis, building on photographic concepts discussed and practiced during the sessions. Students' work will be submitted and displayed online for teacher analysis and peer-to-peer assessment. Students will have to write a brief analysis on three images, assigned by the teacher, and make constructive criticism, based on acquired learning about photographic narrative, expression and technic. At the conclusion of the workshop, all students will have posted 36 images and 36 individual

analyses on other students' work and one group assessment. Below, we are offering an in-depth explanation of each of the workshop parts and sessions.

### 5.2.3 First part: Approach.

This first part of the workshop aims to introduce the students to the essentials of photographic theory to equip them with the minimum necessary tools, the core of the visual literacy, which will allow them to keep learning on their own in the future.

It will consist on 5 sessions all of 1h of length. As it is detailed in Table 3, all sessions will be based on blended activities. These include, mainly teacher explanations, photo viewings of works by visual artists and simple exercises focused on practicing the basics of photo making. Students will be invited to the public discussion on their classmate's tasks in the classroom. In addition to it, an Instagram account will be used to share the images created by the students and to facilitate the assessment, from teacher to student and between peers. The use of a social media environment will support learning activities, such as collaboration and communication, as Greenhow & Lewin (2016) have observed.

Table 3. Structure of the first part of the workshop

Session	Part 1. Approach.	Space
1	Presentation of the workshop Basics on technic #1. Case study, August Sander Creation of the Instagram classroom account Explanation of task #1:	Classroom
Before 2	Students: creating and uploading images for task #1 Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
2	Basics on technic #2. Case study, continuing August Sander Basics on analysing images. Class debate on the outcomes of task #1 Explanation of task #2	Classroom
Before 3	Students: creating and uploading images for task #2 Assessment between peers: 3 reviews per student Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
3	Basics on visual narrative and expression #1 Case study, Cindy Sherman. Class debate on the outcomes of task #2 Explanation of task #3	Classroom
Before 4	Students: creating and uploading images for task #3 Assessment between peers: 3 reviews per student Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
4	Basics on visual narrative and expression #2 Case study, Jeff Wall. Class debate on the outcomes of task #3 Explanation of task #4	Classroom
Before 5	Students: creating and uploading images for task #4 Assessment between peers: 3 reviews per student Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
5	Class debate on the outcomes of task #4 Introduction of Part 2: <i>Me, why not?</i> (MWN) and <i>One team, one soul</i> (OTOS)	Classroom

### **Photographic theory essentials**

We have selected our core concepts for visual literacy. During the Approach, we will unravel all these ideas as they are listed below. We will stress the relationship between them and its use in the case studies, to embrace the principles of photo-narrative and expressiveness. All of them will keep being recalled during the rest of the workshop to strengthen its comprehension by the students.

1. Framing: putting up limits to a fraction of reality.
2. Focal length: the relationship between background and figure.
3. Location of the camera, thinking about space and distances.
4. The height of the point of view and camera angle, psychological effects.
5. The narrative, what we decide to explain and not explain.
6. Expressiveness, technical tools that we use to control the emotional load.
7. The *mise-en-scène*, on how we question reality.

### **Three case studies**

#### *August Sander*

In the period between the two World Wars, August Sander set out to do a utopian project: he wanted to catalog the entire German population by classifying it for the different social roles or trades of the people he portrayed. The result is the *Man of the twentieth century*. A project where you can see the strength of the expressiveness of the photographic portrait as few portraits in the history of this medium. Through these portraits you can explore the figure-bottom relationships to understand the narrative capabilities of the gender, the focal length and the height of the camera, allowing us to understand the expressiveness of this medium.

#### *Cindy Sherman*

Through the self-portrait, this artist poses the problem of the power of images in the postmodern era. Embracing different roles of female characters from Hollywood films of the 1960s through their self-portraits, questions the influence of the audiovisual media on the identity of women.

#### *Jeff Wall*

Creating seemingly documentary images but made with a perfectly planned scene with actors, this artist raises the coherence of the photographic medium as a communicator of real events when it could be falsified to communicate the message more clearly. Documentary language distorts the facts from the moment the photographer is framed and, therefore, cuts and removes from context a fact.

### **5.2.4. Second part: Working on a project.**

This second part of the workshop will consist on the development of a project on ten sessions all of 1h of length. In the first session, the assignment will be introduced, and the afterward ones will consist of the teacher following up on every student-produced work in open debates to the classroom that will continue, beyond time and space, on the Instagram group.

The project will have two parts: one individual –*Me, why not?*–, and one in groups –*One team, one soul*–. Table 4 offers an overview of all the sessions. As it has been stated, the overall aim of the workshop is to strengthen the collaboration between the students and to build up the sense of community. In addition to it, the reviewed literature shows us that further outcomes can be achieved, such as enriching critical thinking and visual literacy skills in addition to individual and group self-empowerment. As we will describe in more detail below, the topic chosen will be directly related to the future activities and work position that learners could achieve after finishing the studies (see section About gender and topic).

The aim with it is to trigger the process through which the students will start the negotiation with the 'vocational habitus' (Colley at al., 2003), by allowing them to live an early experience that

points not only the process of learning but also the construction of identity. As Colley argues, “VET often acts as a disciplinary process to ‘filter out’ those who are unable to adapt to the demands of the vocational culture. This process may also be seen, however, to reflect agency on the part of the learner, resisting ‘choices’ imposed on them, and moving on to other options within their horizons for action.”

Table 4. Structure of the second part of the workshop

Session	Part 2. Working on a project	Space
Before 6	Students: creating and uploading layouts for <i>MWN</i> Assessment between peers: 3 reviews per student Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
6	On image conceptualizing. Class debate on the layouts for <i>MWN</i>	Classroom
Before 7	Students: creating and uploading images for <i>MWN #1</i> Assessment between peers: 3 reviews per student Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
7	Class debate on the <i>MWN #1</i> images	Classroom
Before 8	Students: creating and uploading images for <i>MWN #2</i> Assessment between peers: 3 reviews per student Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
8	Class debate on the <i>MWN #2</i> images	Classroom
Before 9	Students: creating and uploading images for <i>MWN #3</i> Designing proposals for <i>OTOS</i> Assessment between peers: 3 reviews per student Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
9	Class debate on the <i>MWN #3</i> images and the proposals for <i>OTOS</i>	Classroom
From 10 to 14	Between sessions, following the previous workflow dynamic. Students: creating and uploading images for <i>OTOS</i> Assessment between peers: 3 reviews per student Teacher: public feed-back to each student	Instagram
	Class debate on the <i>OTOS</i> images Assessment between groups: 2 reviews per group	Classroom
15	Public presentation of all groups final <i>OTOS</i> Class debate on the <i>OTOS</i> outcomes All together workshop assesment	Classroom

### About gender and topic

In the graphic arts field, projects can be of a very different nature, and therefore quite a variety of jobs can exist. With the goal of disclosing the diversity of this environment, ‘n’ amount of projects will be held, as many as working groups will be. We will select them from the different specialties available within the working field, to describe all its potential. For example: "book creation" project. In the genesis of a book, a series of essential professional actors take part: the publisher, the proof-corrector, the designer, the printer (pre-printing specialist, the machinist, the manipulator, etc.), bookbinder and distributor. We will choose the five most representative,

the core ones in the process of creating the book and each one will be assigned to one of the members of the group. And so on with each project/group.

Other productive projects: packaging for a mass consumption product, such as a bottle of wine; the advertising campaign for a fashion brand applied to outdoors supports, such as urban furniture of the city, building canvas, buses; implementing the visual identity of a museum in all merchandising elements of its store.

### ***Me, why not? Self-portrait vs selfie***

Taking selfies has become a massive phenomenon. Oxford English Dictionary defines it as “a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media” (Oxford University Press, 2018). The entry for the term self-portrait in the same dictionary is “a painting, photograph, piece of writing, etc., depicting the person who created or produced it.” Apparently, only a thin line divides them: the technic, in some cases, and the channel through which they are shared. Nevertheless, selfies don’t owe the prestige that self-portrait has, and are often considered harmful and even dangerous among the educational communities. On the one hand, they can be highly disruptive in the classroom, on the other, they can promote a narcissistic individuality, often built on the patrons imposed by the mass media. The thousands of public Instagram accounts of teenagers portraying themselves as advertising campaign’s models certify this concern. But it is not less accurate that they offer us the possibility to engage students through an informal medium that belongs to their universe and which with whom they feel comfortable. Not only that, selfies offer us the chance to teach them about critical assessment and production of images, which will turn to their benefit to become consciously aware citizens.

In the literature review, we found very promising experiences of using selfies as a pedagogical tool (Johson et al., 2014; Meehlhause, 2016). Considering, in addition to it, the characteristics of our target, we have decided to design part of the workshop on the practice of this gender: students with a quite often record of school failure that, therefore, are more likely to overuse the social media, in front of which, consequently, they need more support. At the same time, and for the same reasons, they can receive a very significant benefit from an experience that drives them to the self-empowerment.

*The assignment:* Each student will have to produce three different self-portraits assuming the professional role that he will have chosen. The members of the group will distribute the characters so that each team will have all the represented actors. The students will become “that” professional, and they will have to make a self-portrait that expresses their belonging and identification with the job. The three self-portraits respond to three different narrative approaches, corresponding to three questions that the student will have to answer through the image and with a complementary text.

Me, why not? #1: Self-portrait to express how you imagine the day to day work.

Me, why not? #2: Self-portrait with a tool or material (e.g., densitometer, computer, paper, etc.).

Me, why not? #3: Self-portrait in your professional space (e.g., workshop, office, etc.).

The student will present the outcome work to the class; classmates will debate about it with the guidance of the teacher.

### ***One team, one soul. Portraiting a group.***

The group work has been designed regarding the fact that both, task and outcome, might have a significant and well-balanced weight of interdependencies. The teacher will set up the working groups. Due to our lack of experience regarding the way to set up the composition of the groups, we have searched in the literature for proper answers. Although there are all opinions, seems there is a consensus on the effectiveness of randomly assigned groups. McClelland suggests that randomly allocated groups enhance both the individual’s task capabilities and their teamwork capabilities always on the basis that there is a real need to work in groups (McClelland, 2012).



Based on my previous experiences, groups for this kind of tasks should be composed, ideally, by not more than three students. Despite this fact, available resources, economic, time and people-wise will force us to create groups of five people.

*The assignment:* The members must create a group portrait; what is to be represented here is the overall identity of the work team. An image that explains not only what they can do, but that transmits the DNA of the group based on the following idea: the team is not the addition of five people, but a new artifact unified with a single soul.

There will be several approaches to the topic, with the same resources that we will have used for self-portraits: the tools and spaces, plus a new one, the *mise-en-scène*. Among them, each group will choose one of the routes to develop the final prey.

In this case, the presentation will also be made in public, by groups, to the rest of classmates. The teacher will conduce the afterward open debate.

## 6. CONCLUSION

We aim to carry out a systematic literature review to allow us to deepen and complement the present study. After our analyses of the literature, we can say that photography has been studied in the education field mostly as a research tool, rather than a pedagogic one. Documented case studies of extended driven use with the students are minor, but all of them conclude with a positive assessment of the use of the photography as a pedagogic resource. To the best of our knowledge, only one publication has described use of photography for vocational guidance, but not an academical peer-reviewed one (Hasebrook and Gremm, unknown year). In line with Lazarides et al. (2016) we argue that there is a correlation between lack of social cohesion in the classroom and ESL, but further research is needed for proper assesment.

We secondly aim for putting in practice the workshop here proposed, to recall data to make a contribution to the current literature on the topic and to test its feasibility and design in a real-life scenario. We acknowledge that a strategy to overcome student reluctance to participate is still required to be developed.

Despite the below-described limitations, we can hold that photography it is an innovative pedagogic tool for VET environment and an effective one for the aimed goals, as many proved study cases in other education levels underpin (Johnson et al., 2014; Meehlhause, 2016; Taylor, 2012). The archetype tool that photography allows us to envisage is ambitious: a Swiss knife for the visual literacy. We are not in the situation to state that photography is an innovative tool for pedagogy, in general education, to foster cooperation between peers. However, we have achieved updated quality information, which has allowed us to lay a foundation for continuing this work in the short future.

Thus, we believe it is worth continuing along this path if we add to it the high capabilities of blending photography and social media, of which we already know positive implemented results (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). The future outcomes can very well reach a promising boost of social interaction within the VET classroom.

Another remarkable outcome from this study, maybe not for the researchers' community, but ourselves, is the suitability of merging researcher and practitioner, on the researched topics, in one figure. There are many things that literature arises that the professional already knew, from this sharp dimension of the intelligence that intuition is. The professional has absorbed practical knowledge through the skin during years of active and passive observation. This potential is worth thinking to be exploited. Perhaps through even more open multidisciplinary teams beyond the walls of the academia.

### 6.1. Limitations

Time has been, since its very beginning, a constant constraint in the development process of this study. Due to it, we early decided to cut down our ambition and to set up as a first feasible goal to reach the theoretical design of the workshop. Nevertheless, we expect to be able to put it into practice in upcoming months.

Another critical limitation has been the lack of experience, especially in the literature review. As a result, a valuable amount of time has been spent in clearing up the outcomes from databases but not to acquire a rigorous summary on each one of the topics researched, as a seamless systematization would have provided us with.

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